

For immediate release
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USIBWC COMMISSIONER REACHES MILESTONES IN BORDER SANITATION PROJECT

Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) today announced that the Commission has reached two key milestones in its efforts to implement a border sanitation project for the San Diego, California-Tijuana, Baja California region – 1) issuance of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Clean Water Act Compliance at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant and 2) initiation of negotiations with Bajagua Project LLC regarding proposed new wastewater treatment facilities.

“I am pleased to announce that the Commission is making quick and substantive progress on this project. We are well on our way to improving the health and quality of life of residents in the San Diego-Tijuana border region by implementing yet another step toward a comprehensive solution to the 60-year longstanding problem of lack of appropriate sanitation in this region,” said Commissioner Duran.

The USIBWC has completed a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that analyzes and evaluates the impacts of alternatives for the agency’s South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Diego County to achieve compliance with the Clean Water Act. The Preferred Alternative identified in the SEIS is Alternative 4 Option C, the Bajagua proposal, which consists of continuing to operate the

SBIWTP as an advanced primary facility and returning the plant's treated effluent (approximately 25 million gallons per day) to the Tijuana region in Mexico for secondary treatment at a site and facilities proposed by Bajagua Project LLC. This alternative would also provide for eventual treatment of an additional volume of 34 million gallons per day of raw sewage from Tijuana. This proposal complies with Public Law 106-457, known as the Tijuana River Valley Estuary and Beach Cleanup Act, as amended by Public Law 108-425, and IBWC Minute No. 311 as executed by the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission and approved by both the U.S. and Mexican governments. Commissioner Duran will issue a Record of Decision formally selecting an alternative by October 1, 2005.

In accordance with the Public Law, the private owner of the facility will provide up-front financing for the project. Construction and operation of the proposed Mexican facility will require the concurrence of the government of Mexico, compliance with all applicable requirements of Mexican law, and the obtaining of all necessary permits and approvals from relevant regulatory authorities in both countries. Any payments to the owner will be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

After undertaking market research and interagency consultations to identify the best available means of implementing the Public Law and IBWC Minute No. 311 and of complying with a court order to achieve Clean Water Act compliance at the SBIWTP by no later than September 30, 2008, the USIBWC made a determination to pursue sole-source negotiations with Bajagua Project LLC. The contracting for this project is anticipated to be done in two phases. The first phase involves the negotiation of a contract for the ownership of the treatment facility in Mexico and the treatment services to be provided. The second phase will involve the procurement by the owner, utilizing competitive procedures applicable in Mexico and the United

States, of all services including engineering, construction, and operation and maintenance as well as the acquisition of required land and easements. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Huntsville Center is providing advisory support to the USIBWC on contracting for this project. In compliance with a court order, the anticipated date for completion of the proposed Mexican facility and for full compliance with applicable effluent standards and limitations is on or before September 30, 2008.

Additional information about the project is available in the SEIS on the USIBWC web page at: <http://www.ibwc.state.gov/SBIWTPFinalSEIS.pdf>.

For more information:

Sally Spener
915-832-4175
sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov